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ISSUE ONE ◆ NOVEMBER 1988

THOROUGHFARE

CONSTRUCTION NEWS FROM MARKET STREET

ket Street between Fifth and Fourth Streets

Did It! Phase I Complete

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When finished, the project will alter traffic patterns along Market Street so that transit vehicles will run along all four lanes of the street.

Funds for this $27 million renovation project have come almost entirely from State and Federal budgets. Less than 1% of the total is from the 1968 City bond passed to fund the original beautification work.

Construction on the Market Street Transit Thoroughfare project involves laying new tracks, resurfacing the street and installing wider transit boarding islands. In some places, the street will also be widened and curbs will be realigned to accommodate the new islands. New pedestrian crosswalks will be put in and handicap access will be improved using granite, brick work and exposed aggregate concrete. To complete the beautification work begun in the 1970s, new trees will be planted along Market Street to replace those that died or were removed over the years.

In addition to overall beautification, the plan calls for launching a new "F" streetcar line. An extension of the Historic Trolley Festival staged over the last five summers, the new "F" streetcar line will feature historic and vintage streetcars as well as a modern streetcar fleet.

All track work for Phase I is complete, all street surfaces have been repaved and new MUNI rails have been laid from Third to Eighth Streets. A containment structure, designed to reduce noise and vibration, was constructed at the special track work west of Fifth Street. The containment structure, called a ballast mat, is both a state of the art engineering design and the first of its kind in North America.

Due to the scope and technical specifications of the project, it may be necessary for crews to continue work after the holidays to

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MARKET STREET
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The THOROUGHFARE

CONSTRUCTION NEWS FROM MARKET STREET

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View of Market Street between Fifth and Fourth Streets

We Did It! Phase I Complete

In April construction crews broke ground for the Market Street Transit Thoroughfare, the final stage of an effort which began two decades ago to revitalize San Francisco's premier artery. The project, divided into several phases, will combine beautification with a renovation of the MUNI system.

After almost eight months of intense construction, Phase I of the project, from Third to Eighth Streets is substantially complete, on schedule and within budget. Phase II, scheduled to begin early next year, includes the renovation of Market Street from Fremont to Third and from Eighth to Eleventh Streets.

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JASPER O'FARRELL:

The Father of Market Street

Market Street did not exist in San Francisco's earliest days. In 1846, when American Forces occupied what was then known as the town of Yerba Buena, the entire line of Market Street from Hayes to Third Street was a series of sand hills. The main route between the town and Mission Dolores was "Old Mission Road," which later became Mission Street. Modern San Francisco owes the wide and important thoroughfare Market Street is today to the vision of a young Irish civil engineer, Jasper O'Farrell.

In 1846 O'Farrell was commissioned by the first American *alcalde*, or mayor, Lt. Washington A. Bartlett, to prepare a detailed map of what was then Yerba Buena, indicating existing streets and providing for new ones. By the end of 1846 the town's population was a mere 500, and there were fewer then 200 buildings, yet O'Farrell had the insight and confidence to plan for the city's future growth. He realized that the city, on the shores of a tremendous natural harbor, facing westward toward the trade of the orient, was destined to become a bustling seaport. His insight is perhaps even more remarkable because it seems to have foreseen the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, which turned the Bay Area into a major trading and shipping center.

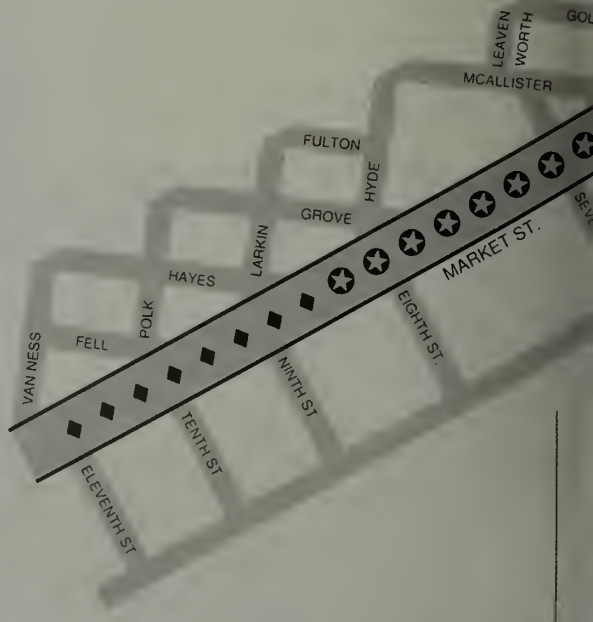
O'Farrell designed Market Street as a main boulevard to cut diagonally across the checkerboard pattern of the intersecting streets. The planned street ran parallel to the old Mission Trail, from Yerba Buena Cove to Mission Dolores, the town's most heavily traveled route at the time. O'Farrell correctly calculated that the normal flow of traffic in the future city would be in that direction.

The generous width of Market Street is perhaps O'Farrell's most important and controversial innovation. His insistence on the 120-foot width was rooted in his vision of a major thoroughfare that would be a center of social and commercial activity in a prominent international trading center. The street's broad expanse was thus O'Farrell's way of ensuring that San Francisco would some day take its place among the world's great cities.

The reaction of Market Street's property owners to O'Farrell's thoroughfare surprised him. When the engineers completed O'Farrell's map of Market Street, the unusual width of the proposed street angered the property owners, who felt that the plans ignored their rights as private land owners. A protest meeting was held, and tempers flared until a lynch mob was formed. O'Farrell, warned by a friend, fled to North Beach, where he caught a boat for Sausalito. From there he proceeded by horse relay to his retreat in Sonoma.

Despite the uproar, Market Street was laid out according to O'Farrell's design, and the property owners eventually realized the economic advantages they enjoyed as a result of the new activity this broad new thoroughfare attracted to their properties. O'Farrell finally returned to San

Rail work underway.



Brick work on handicap curb in progress.

Francisco, his judgment vindicated, and the citizens of the City expressed their gratitude by naming O'Farrell Street in his honor. Over the years that followed, Market Street continued to grow and develop as a commercial and social center.

In many ways, the 1968 Market Street Beautification Plan and the present construction program are an extension of O'Farrell's original concept. By building this transit thoroughfare and grand boulevard, San Francisco reaches back to O'Farrell's vision of Market Street as a magnet for its rich and diverse life. ■

We Did It! *continued from page 1*

conform construction details. While crosswalks along Market Street are complete for the most part, at locations in some newly constructed areas, puddles have accumulated from rainfall. Construction crews will be working at those locations to correct this problem. Some sandblasting of crosswalks is also needed to obtain the finished look of exposed aggregate.

Construction was done in a sequential pattern, alternating every other block between curb and track work so that MUNI vehicles still had access to traffic lanes. During construction, vehicular traffic was rerouted to allow regular MUNI bus and trolley coach service to continue for most of Phase 1.

Although temporary MUNI relocations occurred during Phase I construction, MUNI remains committed to minimizing disruptions to its scheduled service and regrets any inconvenience these changes may have caused its ridership. In the event that changes may occur during Phase II construction, MUNI will notify its ridership in advance.

As a result of a citywide ordinance, major construction during the holiday season is prohibited where more than 50% of the buildings are occupied by businesses. Because the ordinance applies to Market Street, work on the project intensified shortly before the Thanksgiving holiday. This schedule guaranteed that construction would not interfere with holiday shopping in downtown San Francisco.

On Thanksgiving day, the entire stretch of Market Street from Third to Eighth Streets will be open to traffic and all MUNI boarding islands and curb stops will be operational.

When all phases of construction are complete, the Market Street Transit Thoroughfare promises to revitalize the City's main artery. This beautification and renovation of Market Street will be the fulfillment of that promise. Improvements under construction today represent the City's commitment to the transportation needs of Market Street tomorrow. With our own "Champs Elysees of the West," San Francisco's international renown as a vital center of culture and commerce will continue into the 21st century. ■

MARKET STREET FORUM

How do I find out what's happening on Market Street?

You can pick up Market Street information brochures (available soon) at the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, Hallidie Plaza location; on MUNI buses in the "Take One" slots; and at selected retail locations on Market Street. The brochures will include a detailed project map. You can also read the project newsletter, *The Thoroughfare*. In addition to this issue, there will be four more to be published over the life of the project. Each issue will include the latest construction news as well as background stories about Market Street's historic past, its present and its future.

Is there anyone I can talk to if I have a problem or question about the project?

Yes. A special Market Street Hotline has been set up. The number is 543-6742. Weekdays, a public information person is available from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

Are there any other sources of information?

Yes. Besides the take-one brochures, and *The Thoroughfare*, a slide show will be available for screening to merchants, community groups and other associations on request. If you would like to arrange for a presentation, please contact our Hotline number at 543-6742.

It seems that MUNI has rerouted several bus lines on Market Street over the last few weeks. Will any more bus lines be affected?

While MUNI is committed to minimizing disruptions to its scheduled bus service, it has sometimes been necessary to reroute lines that run on Market Street. Some temporary changes in MUNI service may go into effect during Phase II construction. If changes do occur, MUNI will make every effort to notify its ridership. If you have specific questions about MUNI routes or stops, call 673-MUNI.

Why did it seem construction crews kept working on stretches of Market Street that looked finished?

Some of the work being done involved repairs to underground utilities like sewer and traffic systems. Obviously, construction progress in those areas could not be seen from the the street. Also, construction work was alternated from curb lane to track lane. That way, at least one lane in each direction was available to MUNI vehicles.

Could construction delays or amendments to the November completion deadline keep the work going to the end of the year?

No. Market Street is covered by a city-wide ordinance that prohibits major construction during the holiday season (From Thanksgiving to New Year's) in any area where more than 50% of the buildings are occupied by businesses.

The Market Street Transit Thoroughfare newsletter is a joint project of the San Francisco Municipal Railway and Department of Public Works.
Please send any comments or questions to: The ThoroughFare, 995 Market St., Room 808, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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